

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

SECRET-U.S.OFFICIALS ONLY

COUNTRY	Poland	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Gift Parcels and Black Market Prices	DATE DISTR.	19 November 1954
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	2
PLACE ACQUIRED		REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
		REFERENCES	
	This is UNEVALUATED Information		

25X1

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. A considerable number of Polish citizens who have relatives or friends in Western countries receive gift parcels at regular intervals. These parcels contain commodities which either have been specifically requested by the recipients or are known by the sender to be of value and can be sold by the recipients. The authorities have adopted a liberal attitude in allowing the receipt of an unlimited number of gift parcels without an import license or other special authorization. However customs duties, in accordance with a published fixed tariff available to every Polish citizen, must be paid.
2. Examination of gift parcels by the customs officials is not very strict. All parcels are opened and examined, but are neatly repacked before delivery. It is not customary to tear up, dismantle, or damage objects in which anything might be concealed. In case a gift parcel contains special articles, such as raw materials, chemicals, etc., which are beyond the scope of the average customs official, an expert from the appropriate branch of the Customs Department will examine them in the presence of the recipient, who in such cases is summoned to the post office, will determine their value, and fix the customs charges. Most of the customs experts are favorably disposed toward the recipients and are also amenable to bribery. Usually gift parcels are delivered by the post office to the home of the recipient. If he is not at home, a notice is left and he must pick up the parcel at the post office.
3. The receipt of gift parcels from outside the Iron Curtain in no way jeopardizes the standing or employment of the recipient, unless he is a known Party member or high official. The publication of the new list of custom charges at the beginning of 1954, the lack of bureaucratic hindrances, and the exceptionally quick and efficient delivery service tend rather to indicate an official attitude encouraging the receipt of these parcels, whether they contain essential goods, luxury goods, scarce materials to be sold on the free market, or raw materials for the still existing small private industry.
4. Some results of the official backing of the receipt of gift parcels are:
 - a. People who do not wish to work are able to prove their means of support by showing

SECRET-U.S.OFFICIALS ONLY

STATE	X	ARMY	X	NAVY	X		X	FBI		AEC						
-------	---	------	---	------	---	--	---	-----	--	-----	--	--	--	--	--	--

(NOTE: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

SECRET-U.S.OFFICIALS ONLY

- 2 -

customs receipts for gift parcels.

- b. Loopholes are provided for a fairly extensive smuggling activity by pilots, sailors, diplomatic couriers, etc., the possession of a customs receipt serving as a pretext for the possession of Western merchandise.
 - c. A number of sharp dealers and former merchants with good connections in the West operate a flourishing business in Western commodities which are scarce or are not available from local sources.
 - d. Although outstanding Party members and high officials do not dare receive such parcels, their wives do purchase American nylon stockings, cosmetics, textiles, etc. on the free market.
5. It is obvious to everyone that the high quality and free availability of goods in Western countries and the fact that the people can afford to send gifts run counter to Communist claims of inefficiency and poverty in the capitalist countries. The realization of this fact by large sections of the population, especially in the towns, has a noteworthy influence on their attitude toward the new regime, their lack of susceptibility to Communist propaganda, and their refusal to adapt themselves to their lot.
6. The sending of gifts from Western countries to Poland has been encouraged even more by the decision of the government to allow the purchase of gifts through branches of the PKO bank abroad. If the price of the gift is paid in U.S. dollars in a PKO branch in Paris, London, or elsewhere, a Polish citizen will receive, free of any further charge in local currency, a Pobieda car, an imported Czech Jawa motorcycle, or any other gift which would otherwise not be available to the average citizen. Though otherwise restricted to the district of the owner's residence, licenses allowing free movement in the whole country are granted for motor vehicles received through the PKO gift scheme.
7. The following are black market prices for certain articles, coins, and currency:
- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| a. U.S. dollars | <u>Zloty</u>
approximately 70 |
| b. 10-ruble gold coin (8 grams) | 1,000 to 1,100 |
| c. 15-ruble gold coin (12 grams) | 1,500 |
| d. U.S. \$20 gold coin | 4,500 |
| e. British gold sovereign | 1,000 to 1,100 |
| f. 1 gram fashioned gold | 120 |
| g. 1 gram scrap gold | 90 to 100 |
| h. Swiss Schaffhausen gold wrist watch | 9,000 to 10,000 |
| i. Swiss Doxa gold wrist watch | 4,000 to 5,000 |
| j. 3 million units of penicillin
(British or American) | 150 |
| k. 1 gram streptomycin | 30 to 40 |
| l. 12 grams liver extract | 250 |

25X1

SECRET-U.S.OFFICIALS ONLY